

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-35, and 37-51 are pending in the application. Claims 1-12, 15-17, 20-35, 38-44, and 47 stand rejected. Claims 45, 46, and 48-51 have been allowed. Claims 13, 18, 19, 36, and 37 are objected to. Claims 5 and 36 have been canceled.

The rejection of Claims 3, 15, 16, 22, and 47 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully traversed. Claims 3, 15, 16, 22, and 47 have been amended. Accordingly, Claims 3, 15, 16, 22, and 47 are submitted to overcome the Section 112, second paragraph rejection. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112 rejections of Claims 3, 15, 16, 22, and 47 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 has been amended to remove the phrase “swelling agent”. Accordingly, Claims 1-12 are submitted to overcome the Section 112, first paragraph rejection. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112 rejections of Claims 1-12 be withdrawn.

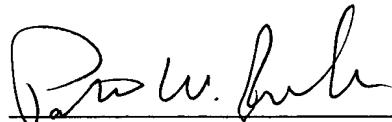
The rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-12, 17, 20-35, and 38-44 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph is respectfully traversed. Independent Claims 1, 17, and 32 have been amended to include bentonite. Accordingly, Claims 1-4, 6-12, 17, 20-35, and 38-44 are submitted to overcome the Section 112, first paragraph rejection. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 112 rejections of Claims 1-4, 6-12, 17, 20-35, and 38-44 be withdrawn.

The objection to Claims 13-16, 18, 19, 36, and 37 is respectfully traversed. Claim 13 is an independent claim that has not been rejected. Accordingly, Claim 13 is submitted to be in condition for allowance. Claims 14-16 depend from independent Claim 13 and are submitted to be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons set forth with respect to Claim 13. Claims 18 and 19 depend from independent Claim 17 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Claims 18 and 19 are submitted to be in condition for allowance. Claims 36 and 37 depend from Claim 32 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Claims 36 and 37 are submitted to be in condition for allowance. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objection to Claims 13-16, 18, 19, 36, and 37 be withdrawn.

Claims 15, 16, and 47 have been amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection as described above. Accordingly, Claims 15, 16, and 47 are submitted to be patentable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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